|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jihad Report  Feb 18, 2017 - Feb 24, 2017 | |
| Attacks | 38 |
| Killed | 263 |
| Injured | 281 |
| Suicide Blasts | 7 |
| Countries | 11 |

**And a New Galaxy Orbiting the Milky Way**

Astronomers scanning the skies just got a huge surprise. They discovered a gigantic galaxy orbiting our own, where none had been seen before. It just came out of nowhere. So, just how did the recently-discovered Crater 2 succeed to pull off this feat, like a deer jumping out from the interstellar bushes to suddenly shock us? Even though the appearance may seem sudden, the Crater 2 has been there all along. We just never saw it. Now that astronomer know it’s there, though, there are a few other crushing facts that astronomers discovered. First of all, we can’t blame the galaxy’s size for its relative insignificance. Crater 2 is so massive that researchers have already identified it as the fourth largest galaxy orbiting our own. We can’t even blame its distance, either. Crater 2's orbit around the Milky Way puts it just precisely in our neighborhood.

That being said, the question arises, how did we still not know it was there? A new research paper published in [Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society](http://mnras.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/04/13/mnras.stw733.abstract) from astronomers at the University of Cambridge has an answer for us. It turns out that, regardless of being huge and close, Crater 2 is also a pretty dark galaxy. Actually, it’s one of the faintest galaxies ever detected in the cosmos. That, along with some much perkier neighbors, let the galaxy that astronomers have nicknamed “the feeble giant” remain hidden from our eyes until now.

Now that we have observed Crater 2, nevertheless, the discovery yields some questions about what else could be out there that we are still missing. Astronomers are already talking about starting a hunt for similarly large, dark galaxies near us. It’s a good thing that there’s still so much about cosmos that we still don’t know.

**A Massive 'Blob' of Abnormal Conditions in the Pacific Has Increased Ozone Levels**

The strangest meteorological event in decades.

BEC CREW

17 FEB 2017

A vast patch of abnormally warm water in the Pacific Ocean - nicknamed [the blob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blob_%28Pacific_Ocean%29) - resulted in increased levels of ozone above the Western US, researchers have found.

The blob - which at its peak covered roughly [9 million square kilometres](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/09/warm-water-pacific-coast-algae-nino/) (3.5 million square miles) from Mexico to Alaska - was assumed to be mainly messing with conditions in the ocean, but a new study has shown that it had a lasting affect on air quality too.

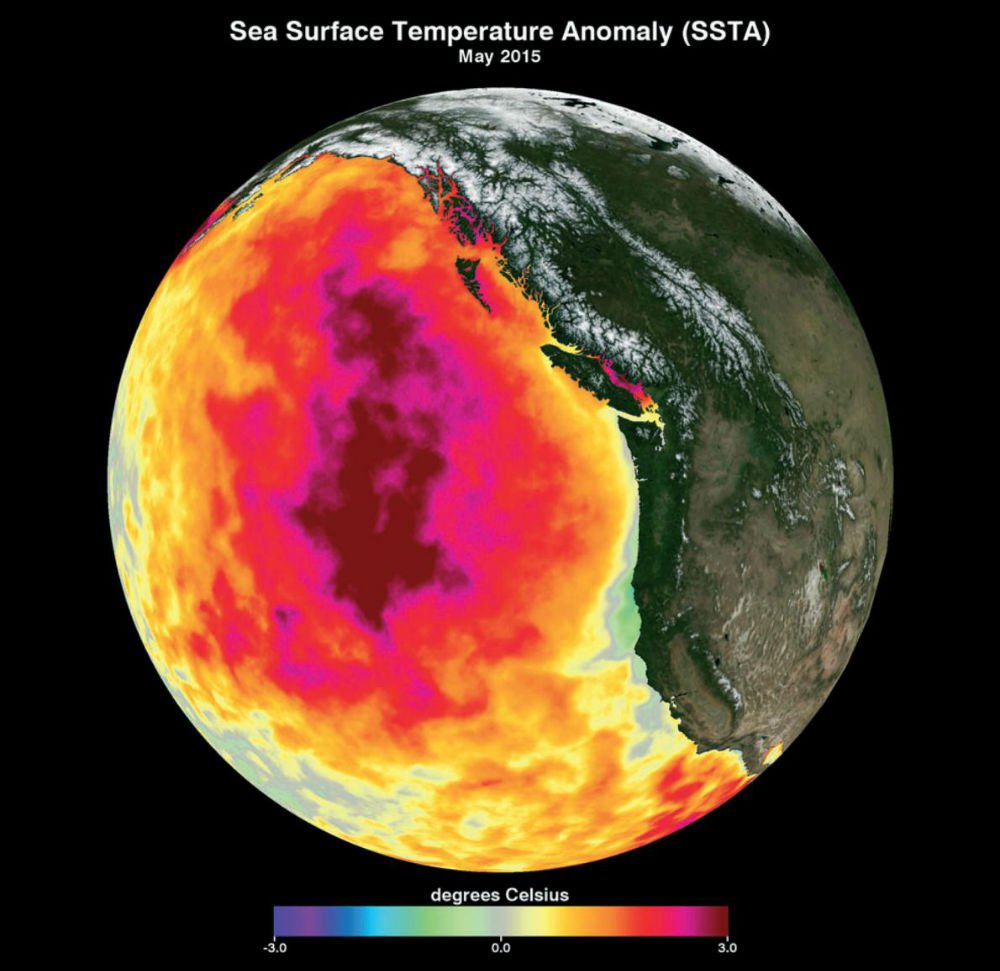
"Ultimately, it all links back to the blob, which was the most unusual meteorological event we've had in decades," [says one of the team](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170215101438.htm), Dan Jaffe from the University of Washington Bothell.

The blob of warm water in the Pacific was first detected back in 2013, and it continued to spread throughout 2014 and 2015. While it was less obvious in 2016, there were some indications that it [persisted well into last year](https://phys.org/news/2016-07-blob-overshadows-el-nino.html) too.

The vast, warm patch has been linked to [several mass die-offs](https://phys.org/news/2015-04-wedge-seawater-blob-blamed-marine.html) in the ocean during 2015, including thousands of California sea lions [starving to death](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/09/warm-water-pacific-coast-algae-nino/) in waters more than 3 degrees Celsius (5 degrees Farenheit) above average, and an ["unprecedented" mass death](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/01/150123-seabirds-mass-die-off-auklet-california-animals-environment/) of seabirds in the Western US.

In April 2015, the effects could also be seen on land, with [a bout of strange weather in the US](http://www.washington.edu/news/2015/04/09/warm-blob-in-pacific-ocean-linked-to-weird-weather-across-the-u-s/) being linked to the higher ocean temperatures, and the increased temperatures saw a [massive toxic algal bloom](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/02/space-map-pacific-blob/) stretch along the entire US West Coast.

"I can't truly give an explanation of what is going on right now," marine ecologist Jaime Jahncke from conservation group, Point Blue, [said in late 2015.](https://baynature.org/article/warm-el-nino-water-meets-a-north-pacific-already-disrupted-by-the-blob/)

Unusually high sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific in May 2015, compared to the 2002-2012 average. Credit: American Geophysical Union

Jaffe and his team have been monitoring ozone levels over the US since 2004, and happened to noticed a bizarre spike in 2015. They wondered if the crazy events linked to the blob that year could also have been driving this massive boost in ozone.

"At first we were like 'Whoa, maybe we made a mistake.' We looked at our sensors to see if we made an error in the calibration. But we couldn't find any mistakes," [Jaffe says in a press statement.](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170215101438.htm)

"Then I looked at other ozone data from around the Pacific Northwest, and everybody was high that year."

To see if there was a connection, the team mapped the lifespan of the blob in unprecedented detail, using multiple satellites positioned all over the globe to track temperature fluctuations on the Pacific Ocean's surface between 2014 and 2016.

They then went back and compared the events to sea-surface temperature records dating back to 1910, and what they found was unlike any natural phenomenon ever seen in recorded history.

"This phenomenon is something new," one of the team, Chelle Gentemann from Earth and Space Research in Seattle, [told *National Geographic*.](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/02/space-map-pacific-blob/)

"From that entire record, this event is unprecedented in magnitude and duration. There's just nothing like it in our historical record."

They found that the effects of the blob on land - warmer temperatures, low cloud cover, and calmer air - actually combined to produce extra ozone, and by June 2015, this had pushed ozone levels to between [3 and 13 parts per billion](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170215101438.htm) higher than average over the northwestern US.

Certain areas with already high ozone levels, such as Salt Lake City and Sacramento, saw their ozone pushed above federally allowed limits.

"Washington and Oregon was really the bullseye for the whole thing, because of the location of the winds," [Jaffe explains.](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170215101438.htm)

"Salt Lake City and Sacramento were on the edge of this event, but because their ozone is typically higher, those cities felt some of the more acute effects."

So how does something in the ocean affect our ozone levels?

Under normal conditions, winds along the West Coast run along the surface of the ocean, and push the top layer away from the coast. This allows the colder water below to take its place, bringing vital nutrients with it, and balancing out the temperature.

But the team found that during the blob's peak, the increased temperatures on the surface of the ocean had caused the air above heat up and stagnate. This weakened the coastal winds so much, they were no longer able to push the warm top layer of the Pacific away from the shoreline.

And with no upwelling of cool water, the high temperatures remained, and together with a lack of clouds, this allowed the [chemical reaction](https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/csd/assessments/ozone/2010/twentyquestions/Q2.pdf) that produces ozone - solar ultraviolet radiation (sunlight) breaking down oxygen molecules - to kick things up a notch.

"Temperatures were high, and it was much less cloudy than normal, both of which trigger ozone production," [says Jaffe](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170215101438.htm).

"And because of that high-pressure system off the coast, the winds were much lower than normal. Winds blow pollution away, but when they don't blow, you get stagnation and the pollution is higher."

While the ozone spike was only temporary, the team says we should take this as a warning for the future - researchers already knew there was a connection between higher atmospheric temperatures and ozone production, but now we know that sea-surface temperatures can affect it too.

And with [ozone pollution](http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/OzoneWeBreathe/ozone_we_breathe2.php) known to cause serious respiratory dysfunction, including aggravating pneumonia, asthma, and bronchitis, we'd better be prepared for when something like the blob rears its head once more.

The research has been published in [*Geophysical Research Letters.*](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2016GL072010/abstract)

**Space-X Lifted Off From Cape Canaveral and Came Back**

Space X has been [steadily nailing landings](https://sciencealert.com/spacex-is-back-in-business-with-a-glorious-rocket-landing-over-the-weekend) on a floating platform at sea for months now.

But over the weekend, the innovative space company accomplished something even more impressive - it flew one of its reusable Falcon 9 rockets back to [Cape Canaveral Air Force Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Canaveral_Air_Force_Station) in Florida, and achieved a smooth touch-down on the tarmac for only the third time on land.

You can see that beautiful landing in the footage below. It's so perfect, it hardly looks real:

Impressive return flights aside, the launch itself is pretty historic - Falcon 9 took off on Sunday from [Launch Complex 39A](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kennedy_Space_Center_Launch_Complex_39) at Kennedy Space Centre in Florida - the same launch pad that was used for the Apollo missions in the '60s.

It was at launch complex [39A that Apollo 11 blasted off](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_11) from before shuttling humans to the Moon for the very first time back in 1969. And this weekend was the first time that any spacecraft had launched from that pad since NASA's Space Shuttle Atlantis took its [final flight in July, 2011](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Shuttle_Atlantis).

It's also SpaceX's first launch from Florida since their [devastating explosion in September last year](http://www.sciencealert.com/spacex-could-be-grounded-for-up-to-1-year-after-its-falcon-9-rocket-explosion).

The Falcon 9 rocket that launched on the weekend was carrying a Dragon supply ship to the International Space Station as part of a resupply mission for NASA. It was filled with around [2,500 kg (5,500 pounds) of cargo](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-20/space-x-lifts-off-from-kennedy/8285046) and science experiments - [including a lethal superbug](http://www.sciencealert.com/spacex-is-about-to-send-a-lethal-superbug-into-orbit) that could teach us about the future of disease here on Earth.

About 10 minutes after launch, the first stage of the rocket - the part that gives it enough power to get off the ground - had flown back to land, touching down at SpaceX's [Landing Zone 1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Canaveral_Air_Force_Station) pad at Cape Canaveral Air Force.

It's only the [third time SpaceX](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/19/science/spacex-launch-kennedy-space-center.html?_r=0) has landed a rocket on land, but it's the [eighth successful landing](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/19/science/spacex-launch-kennedy-space-center.html?_r=0) overall of a reusable Falcon 9 rocket.

The reusable rocket is key to Musk's ultimate plan of reducing the cost of launching people and objects into space.

In a traditional launch, the rocket's first stage is left to crash into the ocean after it's done its job. But by recovering the Falcon 9 rockets, SpaceX saves the estimated [US$62 million](https://sciencealert.com/spacex-is-back-in-business-with-a-glorious-rocket-landing-over-the-weekend) cost of building a new one each time it wants to launch something into space.

As humans move further and further away from our home planet, that's going to be a very big deal. Space X expects to launch one of these recovered rockets as early as October to test whether they work as well the second time around.

"Baby came back," Elon Musk [posted on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/p/BQspL7Qhv1v/?taken-by=elonmusk) shortly after the successful landing.

"It was really awesome to see 39A roar back to life," SpaceX Dragon program manager Jessica Jensen [told reporters](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-20/space-x-lifts-off-from-kennedy/8285046) after the launch. "This is a huge deal for us."

A few minutes after the Falcon 9 rocket touched down again, the Dragon supply ship successfully entered Earth's orbit. It's expected to dock with the International Space Station on Wednesday.

The launch was first [scheduled for 14 February](http://www.sciencealert.com/spacex-is-about-to-send-a-lethal-superbug-into-orbit), but was moved to Saturday due to weather concerns. [Saturday's launch was also scrubbed](http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-39021729) in the final seconds due to steering concerns in the rocket's upper state.

But the updated launch on Sunday went off without a hitch.

[According to the Associated Press](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-20/space-x-lifts-off-from-kennedy/8285046), NASA was watching the launch closely before it clears SpaceX to carry NASA astronauts.

**The Religion of Peace**

This is a sad story but it gets to explain how things work in Muslim Egypt. Four years ago in Alexandria Egypt, a 22 year old Muslim named “Marwa A. E” is divorced by her Muslim husband. She later falls in love with her neighbor; a young Coptic Christian man. She then converts to Christianity, marries her Christian love and moves with him to hide in a distant village in Tamia. They had two children and she was two months pregnant. Last week the couple decided to secretly visit their church back in Alexandria and have some fellowship with other Christian friends and relatives at the church. She is then spotted by her daughter she had given birth to from her previous Muslim husband. She had left the church and walked to her friend’s home for fellowship. Her daughter (from the previous Muslim husband) was irate that her mother had taken off the Hijab and had easily recognized her. The daughter then decides to snitch on her mother. She tells her mother’s uncle and brother and they ceased Marwa as it is typically the custom: to kidnap the convert and take them to a family home and keep them in tribal custody until they recant their Christian faith.

The wrath doesn’t just end here and the ruckus then erupts in the village of Tamia where the Muslims create a frenzy at the couple’s village of residence and the feud begins between the locust frenzy Muslims against the Christians who are accused of harboring a fugitive and converting Marwa from Islam to Christianity.

Marwa’s Muslim family then demand to impose the terms for a truce which mandates as punishment that all Christians have 10 days to sell all their properties and leave Tamia with their belongings. The Christian husband’s life and the two children Marwa brought to life are to be spared on the condition that Marwa gives her life in accordance to Sharia justice.

Then the governorate security director, Major General Nasser Abed, supervised the agreement between the Muslim family and several Christian families in the village of “Tamia” to ensure the evacuation of Christians from the village.

And to bury the strife between the two parties, Marwa’s uncle and the brother and all the cousins then took Marwa at dawn and beheaded her. The one who [did the beheading](http://www.tahrirnews.com/posts/339531/%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B0%D8%A8%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%85%D9%86-%C2%AB%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%C2%BB-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85..-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%AC) was Marwa’s sister in order to teach a lesson to all women who leave Islam. Then Marwa’s body was dumbed at a nearby cemetery.

The ugly reality in Egypt is that these converts have no defense and the Christian Coptic church has their hands tied fearing persecution.

Every life is precious. Rescue Christians calls on Egyptian converts from Islam who have similar situation to contact us immediately at [Rescue Christians](http://rescuechristians.org/contact-form/) and we will arrange a way out of Egypt.

**Islam: The Mayhemic Tool of Fascism**

Readers who have followed the rise of Islamo-fascist political and revolutionary movements across the Islamic world over recent years will note the striking similarities in social ideology, political doctrine, propaganda and the exploitation of social inequality, in comparison with the Nazi model.   
  
Is is similarity a coincidence, or is there a deeper connection involved?  
  
There is ample evidence to show that during the latter decade of the Nazi regime, and following the collapse of Nazi Germany in 1945, elements of Nazi ideology found their way into the Middle East. There is a good case to be made that initially, anti-Semitism was at the root of this migration of ideas, but later, other aspects of Nazi model became assimilated.  
  
The connections between the radical 'political Islam' movement and Hitler's regime now span eight decades, and most recently involve an ongoing dialogue between neo-Nazi organisations and 'political Islam' centred organisations.  
  
The roots of current 'political Islam' and its Islamo-fascist ideology lie in the 1920s, when Ataturk secularised Turkey after the fall of the Ottoman regime, and dumped the idea of an Islamic caliphate which spanned the globe. Egyptian Hassan al-Banna, by occupation a schoolteacher, founded Al Ikhwan Al Muslimun (The Muslim Brotherhood) in 1928, a radical revolutionary movement centred in fundamentalist Islam as an ideological model.   
  
The Brotherhood followed the pattern of European revolutionary movements, recruiting followers disaffected by colonial rule in the Arab world, and building up a covert organisation which by some accounts had hundreds of thousands of followers in Egypt by 1945, and branch offices across the Middle East. The aims of the Brotherhood were simple – recreate the 'Golden Age' of Islam by restoring the Caliphate, and drive the infidel 'kafer' colonialists out of the Islamic world. The social groupings around mosques, and traditional Islamic welfare organisations were used as a cover and conduit for financing the movement. By some accounts, much of the early activity of the Brotherhood was modelled on the early NSDAP.

**Russian Ambassador to the UN was Breitbarted**

Vitaly Churkin was one of the [wisest voices in international diplomacy](http://theduran.com/6-best-moments-from-vitaly-churkin-russia-un-ambassador/).  His voice will no longer echo in the halls of the United Nations. Articulate, polite yet commanding, wise yet affable, he oversaw some of Russia’s and the world’s most important events in a position he occupied since 2006.

Churkin had to face a great deal of hostile criticism from both the Bush and Obama administrations during his time at the UN, but he always did so with grace. He never failed to explain the Russian position with the utmost clarity.

Standing next to some of his colleagues, he often looked like a titan in a room full of school children.

His death, [a day before his 65th birthday](http://theduran.com/breaking-vitaly-churkin-russias-un-ambassador-dies-suddenly/), is a tragedy first and foremost for his family, friends and colleagues. It is also a deeply sad day for the cause of justice, international law and all of the principles of the UN Charter which Churkin admirably upheld in the face of great obstacles.

His death however raises many uncomfortable questions…

**Here are 5 things that must be considered:**

**1.  A Macabre Pattern Has Emerged**

Beginning in 2015, there were several deaths within the Russian Diplomatic corps and a special Russian Presidential adviser.

**–LESIN**

First there was Russia’s RT founder and special adviser to President Putin, [Mikhail Lesin](https://www.rt.com/news/335181-russian-media-tycoon-death-washington/). He died in November of 2015 in his hotel room. Reports said that he appeared discombobulated during his last sighting before he died. Later it emerged that he died of a blunt head trauma. Drinking was blamed, but many questions were left unanswered.

**–MALANIN**

Earlier last month, [Andrei Malanin](http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-greece-russia-diplomat-idUKKBN14T29M?il=0), a Senior Russian Diplomat to Greece was found dead in his bathroom. The causes of death remain unknown.

**–KADAKIN**

Just last month, Russia’s Ambassador to India, [Alexander Kadakin](http://indianexpress.com/article/india/russian-ambassador-to-india-alexander-kadakin-dies-4492419/), an always prestigious role, died of a heart attack, although no one was aware of any previous health issues.

**–KARLOV**

In December of last year Russia’s Ambassador to Turkey was assassinated by a lone jihadi gunmen in an art gallery.  There was no effective security as the killer simply walked up to Ambassador [Andrei Karlov](http://theduran.com/andrey-karlov-martyr-war-terrorism-struggle-peace-syria/) and shot him multiple times in the back.

**–CHURKIN**

[Vitaly Chirkin](http://theduran.com/breaking-vitaly-churkin-russias-un-ambassador-dies-suddenly/) is the highest profile member of Russia’s diplomatic corps to die in recent years.

**2. A Motive For Foul Play?**

Each of the recently deceased Russian Ambassadors were high profile targets for miscreants and criminals, whether state actors, mercenaries or fanatics.

Lesin was a instrumental in the creation of RT, a news outlet which has come under constant attack from the western establishment.

Malanin had overseen a period of warming fraternal relations between Greece and Russia at a time when Greece is feeling increasingly alienated from both the EU and NATO.

Karlov is said to be responsible for helping to facilitate the rapprochement between Presidents Erdogan and Putin.

Kadakin oversaw a period of renewed tensions between India and Pakistan at a time when Russia was trying to continue its good relations with India whilst building good relations with Pakistan.

On the 31st of December, 2016, Churkin’s resolution on a ceasefire in Syria passed in the UN Security Council after months of deadlock. The resolution is still in force.

Anyone who wanted to derail the diplomatic successes that the aforementioned men achieved for Russia would have a clear motive to extract vengeance.

**3. Who Stands To Gain?**

In the matter of Karlov, any derailment of restored Russo-Turkish relations would be good for those happy for Turkey to continue her support of jihadists in Syria rather than moving towards accepting a Russian and indeed Iranian brokered peace process which respects the sovereignty of Syria as Russia and Iran always have, but Turkey has not.

In the case of Lesin, anyone wanting ‘vengeance’ for RT’s popularity would be able to say that a kind of former media boss was taken down.

For Malanin, many fear that if ‘Grexit’ happens, Russia will become an increasingly important partner for Greece. The EU would not like one of its vassal states enjoying fruitful relations with Russia, a country still under sanctions from Brussels.

For Kadakin, it is a matter of interest for those wanting Pakistan to continue favouring western powers and not wanting Russia to be able to mediate in conflict resolutions between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Churkin had come to dominate the UN in ways that his counterparts on the Security Council simply could not. No one really stood a chance in a debate with Churkin. His absence leaves open the possibility for a power vacuum that would makes other peoples’ jobs easier.

**4. Where The Deaths Took Place**

Each death took place on foreign soil. Mr. Karlov’s killing in particular, exposed the weakness of his security contingent. If security was that weak in a comparatively volatile place like Turkey, it goes without saying that security in states considered more politically stable would be even more lax.

Again it must be said that a non-biased detective might say that the only pattern which has emerged is that many people in the Russian diplomatic corps and related institutions have heart attacks. Maybe they eat fatty foods every day and drink and smoke too much. But if this was this case, why are the heart attacks all on foreign soil?

If all of the former Ambassadors except Karlov were really in bad health, is it really just a coincidence that none of these men had a health scare on Russian soil? Again, a pattern has emerged.

**5. The Ethics of Speculation?**

Many will say that it is too early to suspect foul play. Indeed, I must make it clear that this is simply speculation based on a pattern of tragic and at times unexplained events, combined with the objective reality that because of Russia’s recently elevated profile as a born-again geopolitical superpower, Russia is a bigger target for international criminals than it was in the broken 1990s or the more quiet early 2000s.

When such events happen, one’s duty is to speculate so that better health and  safety precautions are taken to ensure the wellbeing of Russia’s important diplomats. Furthermore, if foul play is a factor, it means that such seemingly unrelated events must be investigated more thoroughly.

Russia has historically suffered from invasion, revolution and more recently from immense international pressure. The Russian people, like Russia’s ambassadors are entitled to the peace and long lives deserved by any member of a country that has suffered for too long.

There are no coincidences in war, and the world is already at war. These diplomats clearly are victims of the US terrorist state regime. There are many different ways and technologies in this era that even the lay-man could use to give another innocent human being a heart attack from a distance, or at least make it look like they had one. The world already knows that these tactics are being used to murder innocent people that are threats to the US led globalist hegemony.

**HB2: NCAA Extortion**

## Remember when the [media](http://sports.cbslocal.com/2016/03/30/nba-can-act-north-carolina-hb2-bad-law/) warned about the terrible financial loss, and [negative economic impact](http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/business/article76997927.html) North Carolina would sustain after the NBA decided to pull their All-Star game from Charlotte due the state’s HB2 law?

I have always said on this program that the NCAA and the NBA need North Carolina much worse than we need them. The Democrats created a controversy because the law protects women and girls from sexual assault in restrooms and locker rooms. The attorney general of North Carolina spearheaded the effort to enable toe NCAA and the NBA to in effect blackmail Governor McCrory and weaken him politically. They bought tens of millions of dollars in advertisements to destroy him. Although McCrory lowered taxes, gre business, created jobs, hired more teachers, and paid off the State’s multi-billion dollar debt, he was brought to his knees. Why? Because North Carolina is purple. Not red and not blue. The Democrats needed this State. And, when it was done, that same crooked Attorney General, Roy Cooper, ran against Pat McCrory and beat him by a few thousand votes.

Of course, we got the truth out to everyone, and now, it appears the NBA may have taken a big financial hit as well. As of Friday morning, the cheapest available seat for Sunday’s NBA All-Star Game at the Smoothie King Center cost $184, according to data compiled by TicketIQ, a resale market ticket aggregator. That number is a 71% decrease from last year in Toronto, when the cheapest ticket on the Friday before the game cost $644. The plunge may not be over — the price of the cheapest seat in 2014, when New Orleans last hosted the All-Star Game, fell 39% between Friday and tip-off on Sunday. And guess what? The seats are not selling. Americans know what corrupt Democrats did here in North Carolina, and we will never forget.

In other words, the NBA has taken a massive financial hit this weekend. And, that’s not all, Last August, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver announced that New Orleans had been granted hosting rights for the 2017 All-Star Weekend. Overall, tickets to the All-Star Game this year are selling for an average of $1,007 on TicketIQ, a significant drop from last year, when the average resale price for the Toronto game stood at more than $2,000.

“Tickets to this year’s NBA All-Star Saturday Night, which consists of fan-favorite events like the Slam Dunk contests and the Three-Point Contest, are also significantly less expensive than last year. The cheapest available ticket costs $157, compared to $362 on the Friday before the game in 2016.

The press is trying to blame it on game fatigue in New Orleans.

The truth is that a league that concerns itself more with serving as the Democrat bitch than it does with basketball is going to be shunned by the fans it relies on for success. You hurt America. America will hurt you back.

**The Real Stock Market**

With the S&P making new all time highs on a daily (and hourly) basis, and the VIX just why of all time lows, one has to look hard to find something that is amiss with the "market." Which is precisely what SocGen's Andrew Lapthorne did recently, and in his latest report he warns that global indices hitting all time highs is "disguising an underbelly of trouble."

Laphtorne notes that global equity markets continue to move higher, with both the MSCI & FT World Indices hitting all-time highs last week and the S&P 500 specifically hitting a new closing high on Friday. So all would appear to be rosy in the equity market with the consensus promising higher EPS growth in 2017 and bond yields remaining reasonably well behaved despite higher headline rates of inflation and a very slightly more hawkish tone from the US Federal Reserve.

However, the SocGen strategist warns that if one scratches below the surface of these headline numbers and all is not as it seems.

First example**: out of the 1,650 MSCI World stocks only 246 have hit a new all-time high this year.**

Second, and more troubling, example: **the average stock is still 26% down from their all-time highs or down 20% when measured on a median** basis. But given that it is the heavily weighted stocks (think Apple, Amazon, Facebook, JP Morgan and Alphabet) hitting all time highs, **the index headline is concealing a considerably higher number of laggards.**

For the investor this might be quite appealing, Lapthorne observes, as despite the headline index highs, there are plenty of depressed stocks out there potentially set for a rebound. But of course median (unweighted) valuations are also near all time highs, so valuations have already shifted higher, and we would also point out that the number of companies not making a profit remains elevated.

Alternatively, as [Bloomberg noted](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-02-21/hedge-fund-liquidity-falls-to-danger-zone-in-u-s-stock-market) earlier when discussing hedge fund liquidity and position crowdedness, "as money flocks to popular names, the window of escape gets smaller... it’s no coincidence that in each of the last three years, the low point of liquidity all came within three months of a market selloff. Last time it was as low as it is now in July 2015, the S&P 500 suffered the worst decline in four years the next month."

“Their ability to sell in the marketplace is really going to depend on their peers who are trying to sell at the same time,” Stan Altshuller, chief research officer at the analytics firm, said by phone. “It becomes the prisoner’s dilemma.”

A final observation from SocGen: "the stock universe is large, encompassing some 15,000 developed world listed equities, with around 4,500 listed both in Europe and the US. As such, it is a far broader measure of corporate prosperity than the headline indices we typically focus on." Remarkably, of this universe, some 40% of US companies (1,700) are still currently loss making (i.e. have negative net income), "a fact you won’t be aware of if you rely solely on the record breaking S&P 500 and MSCI World indices."

**Additional Muslim Pressures on EU Market**

The ongoing scramble for German safety away from French political uncertainty, has led to yet another blow out day for German 2 Year Schatz, with the yield tumbling to a fresh all time low of -0.92%, as Eurozone breakup concerns have spread from the bond market, and are now pressuring the euro sending the EURUSD below 1.05 for the first time in over a month.

[](http://www.zerohedge.com/sites/default/files/images/user5/imageroot/2017/02/08/2Y%20yield%20germany.jpg)

The rush into German paper and out of France, means that the 10Y Greman-French spread has topped 0.8%, the widest in over four years, while the 2Y US-German spread is now well over 2%, the widest since at least 2000.

Granted, there was a brief moment of respite moments ago, when France 10Y Bonds briefly rallied after the latest OpinionWay poll found momentum for Le Pen stalling, sending French 10y bonds higher, and the yield lower as much as 5bps before paring loss to 2bps, although that burst of optimism appears to have quickly faded.

Adding to the German bid are signals that the ECB is buying German bonds, in particular those with a yield below the -0.4% deposit rate. With investors holding off selling their short-end German debt as they are used as collateral to receive cash at the ECB, fears have reignited of a collateral squeeze similar to late in 2016 which Draghi attempted, and failed, to address in the December ECB meeting.

Ironically, the rush into 2 Year paper took place even as Germany suffered another technically "failed" 30Y auction, in which the Bundesbank was forced to retain 41.8% of the auction as only €733 million bids were tendered for €1 billion in the offered 30Y paper at a yield of 1.04%.

The decline in the 2-Yr yield has been much more pronounced (falling 13bps from Friday) since Le Pen's significant narrowing in the Presidential poll seen at the back-end of last week (now over 40%). The political uncertainty regarding the French Presidential election has filtered into FX markets, weighing on EUR, which is now hovering at 6-week lows having made a break below 1.0520, however the downside has been curbed at 1.0500 led by the upside in EUR/GBP.

As Bloomberg confirms in a note this morning, "German two-year yields are turning ever more negative in the build-up to France’s elections as demand for the securities saturates supply. It’s a reason for caution, and it’s weighing on the euro. "

* Yield reached record-low of -0.915%; the notes are in a sweet spot should investors price in greater risk of a euro- area break-up and pile into securities closest to cash; French candidate Marine Le Pen has threatened to quit euro area
* German notes are also being supported because they’re the top assets for use as collateral in the euro area and ECB buying has made them more scarce.
* Bloomberg adds that central banks in Switzerland and the Czech Republic could also be mopping up German securities as part of their efforts to curb their currencies’ appreciation against the euro.
* France’s notes have been underperforming versus Germany; the two-year yield spread stands at close to 50bps, the widest since May 2012. The spread level is well above its five-year average, and statistical analysis shows it may have room to narrow back toward 36bps. But look to the April 2012 high of 83bps as a guide for how far the spread could go if risks escalate in as France’s election draws near

With US equities ignoring all adverse political news, keep an eye on the German bond market, where the 2Y has emerged as one of the last remaining barometers of political risk.

**Tyranny and the Propaganda State**

“What happened here was the gradual habituation of the people, little by little, to being governed by surprise; to receiving decisions deliberated in secret; to believing that the situation was so complicated that the government had to act on information which the people could not understand, or so dangerous that, even if the people could understand it, it could not be released because of national security... This separation of government from people, this widening of the gap, took place so gradually and so insensibly, each step disguised (perhaps not even intentionally) as a temporary emergency measure or associated with true patriotic allegiance or with real social purposes. And all the crises and reforms (real reforms, too) so occupied the people that they did not see the slow motion underneath, of the whole process of government growing remoter and remoter.”—Historian Milton Mayer, [They Thought They Were Free: The Germans, 1933-45](http://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/511928.html)

This is how tyranny rises and freedom falls.

As Primo Levi, a Holocaust survivor observed, **“Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions.”**

Freedom demands responsibility.

Freedom demands that people stop sleep-walking through life, stop cocooning themselves in political fantasies, and stop distracting themselves with escapist entertainment. Freedom demands that we stop thinking as Democrats and Republicans and start thinking like human beings, or at the very least, Americans. Freedom demands that we not remain silent in the face of evil or wrongdoing but actively stand against injustice. Freedom demands that we treat others as we would have them treat us. That is the law of reciprocity, also referred to as the Golden Rule, and it is found in nearly every world religion, including Judaism and Christianity.

Perhaps it requires a skilled analyst to see what is being sold, quietly and seductively in the universities and propaganda outlets known as the fake stream news. Like the lottery is nothing more than a tax on the poor and the stupid, this fear of government—especially a law and order government—is being flavored with the blood of the World War that lasted for 30 years. Like the smell of charbroiling steaks, we are aroused to a Pavlovian state of desire. Somewhere inside of us we want to hate, because we don’t have enough money, and no one is willing to give us any.

Skilled for centuries in the science of conquering nation states, there is a small group of globalists who know exactly what they are doing. They have been working for millennia to take what is rightfully theirs. You see, anciently, their inheritance was given away to the younger, more quiet and reverent son. Since the dawn of time they have been trying to take it back. They are cowards. They are ruthless, pedophilic, and soaked in lust for power. They have billions of soldiers willing to kill and willing to die for their cause. But what is their cause? How do we get the perfect aroma in the air so people will turn over their lives willingly to the State?

It is about secret combinations. They make oaths with one another of secrecy and devotion. They are taken by force sometimes and broken down, raped, humiliated, and degraded until they can look nowhere but down. Joy is replaced with pleasure. Conscience is replaced with the lash or the blade. The value of human life disappears along with their own, and they are ready to accept any direction, any morsel of reward from the first person they see as they crack open the shell into which they have retreated for survival.

When the people of a State become the enemy of the State, then freedom is lost. When the schools, and the entertainment industry, and the courts, and the lawmakers and thus the law enforcers finally succumb to the mob, then freedom is lost. When the government stops being a structure, and starts being an conscious, living beast with its own appetite and its own will to survive and prosper, then freedom is lost. This is what this small group of planetary planners knows all too well.

When the Oligarchs who are controlling the State, sense they are losing their grip on the State, or when they fear that their trail of murder, bribery, and the sale of weapons will be discovered, they begin killing the people who could leak it, or frightening the ones who could leak it.

**American Ambassadors**

It goes without saying that we rarely get an accurate representation of reality in the corporate media, which is, after all, what independent media exists for. [Last Sunday Joe Quinn and I interviewed a very ordinary couple with a very extraordinary tale: businesspeople James and Joanne Moriarty and how they escaped from capture by Al Qaeda terrorists during the 2011 ‘Libyan revolution’](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/sottradionetwork/2015/06/21/behind-the-headlines-truth-about-libya--interview-with-james-joanne-moriarty). Listening to James and Joanne tell their story, it was impossible not to be struck by the significance, for every human being on this planet, of the problem of psychopaths in positions of power.

The Moriartys present three powerful motivating factors for the destruction of Libya by Western powers and their internationalist financiers:

* thwarting **Gaddafi’s plan to establish a gold-backed currency**, to ultimately serve as a pan-African currency and thereby economically unite African nations and free them from Western imperialism;
* **the US desire to establish AFRICOM** (military control of Africa to ward off Chinese investment)
* an alleged **$7 trillion lawsuit, on behalf of all participating African countries**, at Gaddafi’s instigation, to sue for damages incurred from broken treaties with European countries during their “colonial era”.

So far from “freeing the Libyan people from a dictator”, the NATO bombardment of Libya in 2011 was about the maintenance of US and EU domination over Africa.

But what really comes across in this riveting interview with the Moriartys is **the utter recklessness displayed in Libya** (and elsewhere, for that matter) by both NATO and the ‘rebel’ forces, as well as **the relish with which they demonstrably *enjoyed* tearing the entire country apart**. **These demented animals have access to unparalleled hi-tech weaponry and vehicles, enabling them to ‘achieve feats of destruction’ that before only ‘the gods’ could perform.** Their handiwork is psychopathy writ large, the nihilistic culmination of Western civilization, and the glorious – for them – embrace of the destructive principle.

Among the things we [discussed in the interview](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/sottradionetwork/2015/06/21/behind-the-headlines-truth-about-libya--interview-with-james-joanne-moriarty) were the back-story to how two Texan businesspeople came to be in Libya; what Libya – and Gaddafi – was really like pre-2011; the real ideological motivations for the ‘humanitarian intervention’ – listed above; the atrocities and war crimes witnessed by the Moriartys as they traveled throughout the country as international observers on behalf of a fact-finding commission launched by an international youth organization; their incredible escape from terrorist capture; and the persecution they are today being subjected to by the US government.

[image: http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253600/medium/gaddafi\_mural.jpg](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253600/full/gaddafi_mural.jpg" \t "_blank)

[[](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253600/full/gaddafi_mural.jpg)](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253600/full/gaddafi_mural.jpg" \t "_blank)Gaddafi was so loved across the continent that African tribal leaders made him ‘King of Africa’

One of the most important points to understand about Libya in 2011 is that Gaddafi was no longer the country’s formal political leader. Since 2006 he was essentially Libya’s spiritual leader, a symbol, although he did continue to represent the people’s interests on the international stage. **The country’s form of government – the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya – was nominally socialist, in the sense that wealth was fairly distributed, but it was way more than that. Gaddafi had created, or was the inspiration for, the closest you will ever get to ‘utopia’ on Earth. Libya wasn’t just democratic (in the positive sense of the word); it was humane in a way not seen in the West in a long, long time.**

**That imaginary world you may have dreamed of, where there’s no debt, no insurance companies, no banks (certainly no Central Bank), and where everyone’s needs are taken care of… well,** that was Libya pre-2011. **Disputes were largely settled between people without state intervention**. Libya’s modest military was equipped with Soviet weapons from the 1980s, and was therefore an easy target for overwhelming NATO firepower.

Since the Lockerbie and Berlin disco bombings, for which he was [framed by the CIA and friends](http://www.globalresearch.ca/propaganda-alert-the-lockerbie-bombing-who-was-behind-it-libya-iran-or-the-cia/5373053) – Gaddafi was a pariah in ‘the international community’. After the 9/11 attacks, he sought to bury the hatchet with the West and committed Libya to Bush’s War On Terror, providing rich intel on radicals in his country and making deals that would lift the decades-long embargo on Libya, not least, claim the Moriartys, via massive bribes to Western leaders like former French President Nicholas Sarkozy and Barack Obama (via one of his uncles). [Sarkozy was investigated by police for accepting 50 million euros for his 2007 presidential election campaign](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/12/gaddafi-contributed-sarkozy-2007-election) from Gaddafi.

Western political psychopaths repaid Gaddafi with an extreme form of ‘regime change’ that saw Gaddafi almost literally torn apart by NATO-backed blood-thirsty “rebels”.

The Moriartys describe how NATO forces **bombed the country’s archival buildings**, in an apparent effort to eliminate all traces of Libyan history. **They blew up homes, streets, food stores, schools, hospitals, basic infrastructure like water supplies, wheat fields and date-palm groves**. They ‘opened up’ the country for what it is today a truly “failed state” with daily violence and not one but two competing governments. Libya has some of the best preserved Roman ruins in all the Mediterranean. I don’t know if NATO bombed those too, but [based on what’s happening in Syria](http://www.reuters.com/video/2015/06/24/ancient-syrian-monuments-destroyed?videoId=364705426), it’s only a matter of time before those are destroyed too.

[image: http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253598/medium/hillary\_libya.jpg](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253598/full/hillary_libya.jpg" \t "_blank)

[[](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253598/full/hillary_libya.jpg)](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253598/full/hillary_libya.jpg" \t "_blank)‘I came, I saw, I laughed my a\*\* off!’

The ‘Libyan rebels’ (today operating as ISIS in Syria and Iraq) that Western citizens cheered were invariably **completely off their heads on drugs**. The Moriartys told us how they heard the screams of Libyan soldiers being dragged into their hotel in Tripoli, then taken upstairs to be tortured to death. Mosques were turned into torture centers by the ‘Islamist’ rebels, where thousands of people were raped, cut into pieces, limb-by-limb, and force-fed to the still-living.

**The death toll from NATO’s bombardment and its roving death squads is, based on figures compiled and passed to the Moriartys by tribal leaders, at least** 600,000 dead. The population of Libya was 6 million at the time. The Moriartys say 40,000 of those were tortured to death. Based on meetings with tribal leaders, **they reported to the fact-finding commission that 100,000 people were killed by NATO bombing in the first month.** They claim that **NATO dropped more bombs on Libya from March-October 2011 than were dropped in the entire world during World War Two**. The total figure they have for the number of ‘rebels’ is far higher than anything reported anywhere else: 250,000 **terrorists poured into the country from all over the Middle East and beyond**. It’s clear that the terrorists particularly targeted black Africans, with the Moriartys describing the slaughter as a ‘black genocide’. There are at least 128 mass graves in the country. Another two million people are displaced, barely surviving in refugee camps on the Tunisian and Egyptian borders.

A quarter of a million terrorists… this gives you an idea of the *scale* of these US-led proxy wars. No wonder the combined might of the Syrian, Iranian, Iraqi and Hezbollah forces struggles against ‘ISIS’ in the Syrian desert – they are up against so many foot-soildiers of empire.

[image: http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253597/medium/NATO\_bombing\_libya\_June2011.jpg](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253597/full/NATO_bombing_libya_June2011.jpg" \t "_blank)

[[](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253597/full/NATO_bombing_libya_June2011.jpg)](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253597/full/NATO_bombing_libya_June2011.jpg" \t "_blank)The Western powers embargoed Libya of food, water, medical supplies – [just like Yemen is undergoing now](http://sjlendman.blogspot.fr/2015/05/ussaudi-illegal-blockade-compounds.html). Thousands of armed pick-ups rolled off cargo ships at ports, unloading humvees, SUVs, and pickups loaded for bear with heavy artillery and mercenaries. The Moriartys describe attack helicopters arriving in Tripoli from aircraft carriers and firing indiscriminately at anything and everything. 1,300 people, mostly civilians, were killed on the very first day of the establishment of NATOs so-called ‘no-fly zone’.

Six days into the coup-d’état-disguised-as-a-‘revolution’, the new regime, the Western-imposed ‘National Transitional Council of Libya’, **opened Libya’s first ever central bank**. For Libya to be ‘welcomed back into the international community’, **all its cash, precious metals, and other assets – at home and abroad – were signed over** to the new privately-owned, foreign-controlled Central Bank of Libya. The Moriartys say they also agreed to the **construction of a permanent Israeli military base in Libya**, and that they have documents to prove it.

[image: http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253596/medium/libya\_rebels\_US\_flag.jpg](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253596/full/libya_rebels_US_flag.jpg" \t "_blank)

[[](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253596/full/libya_rebels_US_flag.jpg)](http://www.sott.net/image/s12/253596/full/libya_rebels_US_flag.jpg" \t "_blank)Today they plant the flag in new territory for us, tomorrow they hate us for our freedoms

If you were a journalist in Libya during this time you were relatively safe; not because these animals respected journalists as neutral observers, but **because the journalists were on their side**. The Moriartys have evidence of **embedded journalists, not least from Qatar-owned Al Jazeera, whose staff were among the terrorists from day one, personally calling in airstrikes and working side-by-side with the terrorists**.

The Moriartys know what happened in the Benghazi ‘consulate’ attack on September 11th, 2012. **They had foreknowledge of an attack**, but no one in Washington, D.C. was interested in what they were hearing on the ground. Afterwards, locals told them where the attackers could be found. **Still no interest from Washington**; the US State Department’s announcement at the time of a “*$10 million reward for information leading to the capture of Stevens’ killers*” was pure theater. The Moriartys described to us in detail, based on accounts from eyewitnesses with whom they spoke, the scene at the residence that night. Among other things, Stevens appears to have been killed before the attack started.

As to why Ambassador Chris Stevens was sacrificed, they suspect it’s because he “*knew too much*“. Stevens was overseeing – or was at least deeply involved in – **shipments of weapons and terrorists through the Benghazi residence, which was actually a CIA safe-house, to Syria to fuel the US government’s proxy war against Assad that begun in earnest earlier in 2012.** The Moriartys suggest that Stevens may have been trying to recall delivery of **20,000 ‘MANPAD’ portable surface-to-air missile launchers** to the terrorists.

**Russian Ambassadors**

Smartly-dressed in a dark suit and tie, he blended in with all the other guests at the modern art center in the Turkish capital -- an upscale neighborhood of luxury hotels and embassies.



What do we know about the Turkish assassin? 01:26

But Mevlut Mert Altintas, a police officer who killed Russia's ambassador to Turkey, could handle a firearm with ease.

His first of multiple shots was a direct hit, piercing the back of Andrey Karlov as he spoke about the exhibit -- a series of photographs of his homeland.

The ambassador fell to the floor. Altintas circled his body, visibly agitated as he smashed photos hanging on the wall, said Associated Press photographer Burhan Ozbilici, who witnessed the killing and took a chilling series of images.

Andrey Karlov, the Russian ambassador to Turkey, speaks at the opening ceremony of a photo exhibit in Ankara, Turkey, on Monday, December 19. Moments later, he was fatally shot. Associated Press photographer Burhan Ozbilici was at the event and watched the assassination unfold.

The gunman gestures near the body of Karlov. In a video circulating on social media, the shooter is heard shouting, "Allahu akbar (God is greatest). Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria! Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria!" Russia has been instrumental in helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime in its push to retake the eastern sector of Aleppo, which had been held by rebels for nearly four years. Russia is also the most powerful ally of Assad's regime and has carried out airstrikes since September 2015 to prop up the embattled leader.

Turkey's official Anadolu news agency reported that the gunman had been neutralized. But it was not immediately clear whether the attacker was killed or captured by police. Later, Turkey's Interior Ministry [said Altintas had been killed.](http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/20/europe/ankara-russia-ambassador-shooter/index.html)



Photos: Shooting unfolds in front of photographer

Andrey Karlov, the Russian ambassador to Turkey, speaks at the opening ceremony of a photo exhibit in Ankara, Turkey, on Monday, December 19. Moments later, he was fatally shot. Associated Press photographer Burhan Ozbilici was at the event and watched the assassination unfold.

The gunman gestures near the body of Karlov. In a video circulating on social media, the shooter is heard shouting, "Allahu akbar (God is greatest). Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria! Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria!" Russia has been instrumental in helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime in its push to retake the eastern sector of Aleppo, which had been held by rebels for nearly four years. Russia is also the most powerful ally of Assad's regime and has carried out airstrikes since September 2015 to prop up the embattled leader.















Turkey's Interior Ministry said 22-year-old Altintashad been killed. A police officer for two and a half years, he had been part of the country's riot squad.

He'd attended police vocational school after graduating from high school in Soke, a city in Western Turkey. It's not clear if he was on or off duty when he pulled trigger.

His father, sister and mother have all been detained and his home is being searched, CNN correspondent Muhammad Lila reported.

### What was shooter's motive?

There's no clear motive or claim of responsibility for the attack, which was recorded real time in photos and video that quickly spread worldwide.

"He knew it was going to be filmed and have consequence well beyond this room," said Juliette Kayyem, a CNN national security analyst and Harvard lecturer.

After firing multiple rounds, the gunman shouted: "Allahu akbar (God is greatest). Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria! Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria!"

"Only death will remove me from here. Everyone who has taken part in this oppression will one by one pay for it," he said.



Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the crime was a "provocation designed to spoil" relations between Russia and Turkey and derail the peace process in Syria.

Russia is the most powerful ally of the Syrian regime, which has been engaged in fierce battles to take rebel-held parts of in Aleppo.

It has carried out airstrikes in Syria since September 2015 to prop up the embattled leader President Bashar al-Assad. Russia has also used its United Nations veto powers to block a political solution to end the war.



Activist: Aleppo is like the Middle Ages 02:25

### Impact on relations?

The attack also comes at a time of improving ties between Turkey and Russia -- relations that hit an all-time low after Turkish forces shot a Russian warplane out of the sky near the Syrian border in November 2015.

Leaders of both countries vowed to not let the assassination cast a shadow over that friendship.

"I describe this attack on Russia's embassy as an attack to Turkey, Turkey's state and nation," said Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"After the [attack on the Russian ambassador], during the talk with Mr. Putin, we agreed this is a provocation and there isn't any dispute," he added.

Turkish officials say they are looking to see if Altintas had ties to the Gulenist movement that Turkey has blamed for a coup attempt earlier this year, said CNN's Lila.

Turkey [has demanded the extradition of exiled cleric Fethullah Gulen](http://cnn.com/2016/08/11/politics/turkey-us-fethullah-gulen-ultimatum/), a former Erdogan ally who has been in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania since 1999.

"It's going to be very diplomatically delicate," said Jill Dougherty, a CNN contributor and former CNN Moscow bureau chief.

### Agitated yet in control

Ozbilici, the AP photographer, decided to attend the event as it was on his way home and he hoped to take some photos that could be useful for stories on the thaw in Turkish-Russian relations.

He said Altintas was agitated yet strangely in control during the assassination.

The Interior Ministry didn't give any details of how Altintas was killed but Ozbilici said he died in a shootout.

"When I returned to the office to edit my photos, I was shocked to see that the shooter was actually standing behind the ambassador as he spoke," he said.

"Like a friend, or a bodyguard."

**The Breitbarting of Churkin**

Vitaly I. Churkin, the Russian ambassador to the [United Nations](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/u/united_nations/index.html?inline=nyt-org), who represented his country through times of domestic tumult and rising tensions with the West, died on Monday morning while at work in Manhattan. He would have turned 65 on Tuesday.

The Russian government said he died suddenly but did not specify a cause. The New York City police said there were no indications of foul play.

“The outstanding Russian diplomat died in harness,” the Foreign Ministry said in [a statement posted on Twitter](https://twitter.com/mfa_russia). The United Nations observed a moment of silence on Monday.

His death comes at a critical juncture in Russian-American relations, amid allegations of Russian interference in the United States presidential election and President Trump’s praise for his Russian counterpart, Vladimir V. Putin.

[Continue reading the main story](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/20/world/europe/churkin-russia-ambassador-un-death.html#story-continues-1)

Relations between the two countries have deteriorated in recent years, and diplomats have been watching whether the dynamics will change under the Trump administration with the appointment of Nikki R. Haley to be the American United Nations envoy.

This month, she condemned what she called Russia’s “aggressive” actions in Ukraine. Mr. Churkin, on the same day, lauded her track record in politics. She was governor of South Carolina when Mr. Trump appointed her.

“I never underestimate my colleagues,” Mr. Churkin told reporters before posting on Twitter a picture of their first private meeting.

Mr. Churkin had been unusually absent during several Security Council meetings recently, but this month he brushed off reporters’ questions about his health. The deputy Russian ambassador, Petr Iliichev, said in brief remarks at a United Nations meeting on Monday that Mr. Churkin had been in the office “until the final moments.”

A Fire Department official said a 911 call had reported a cardiac arrest at the Russian mission on East 67th Street in Manhattan. Police officers from the 19th Precinct station house, across the street, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The medical examiner’s office said an autopsy would be conducted on Tuesday.

A police official said Mr. Churkin had a history of medical problems, including leukemia and heart ailments. He had kept them private among his diplomatic colleagues.

Mr. Churkin, a former child actor who had starred in three films, two of them biopics about Lenin, was widely considered a masterly diplomat. He could be caustic and wry in equal measure, especially in exchanges with his American counterparts. Once, after Samantha Power, a United Nations ambassador in the Obama administration, scolded him for [Russia’s actions in Aleppo, Syria](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/12/us/politics/russia-syria-aleppo-bombing-campaign-restraint.html) — “Are you truly incapable of shame?” she said — he accused her of acting like Mother Teresa.

Mr. Churkin had been trained as a translator, and as an ambassador, he sometimes became visibly annoyed with United Nations interpreters who could not keep up with his rat-a-tat speaking style.

Photo



Mr. Churkin with Samantha Power, then the American ambassador to the United Nations, before a vote on the Ukrainian crisis in the Security Council in 2014. Credit Andrew Kelly/Reuters

Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin was born in Moscow on Feb. 21, 1952. He held a Ph.D. in history and was a graduate of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

He began his career in the Soviet era and quickly rose through his country’s diplomatic corps as the Soviet Union was opening up under Mikhail S. Gorbachev. He was a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry from 1990 to 1992, represented his country in peace talks in the former Yugoslavia, and became ambassador to Belgium and Canada before taking on the United Nations post in 2006.

He was a forceful defender of the Kremlin under the leadership of Mr. Putin, who issued a statement of condolence on Monday. But Mr. Churkin was not always comfortable with Mr. Putin’s actions, some diplomats said privately.

Tom Brokaw of NBC News, who had known Mr. Churkin for many years, recalled that at a lunch at his home in 2015, the ambassador described Mr. Putin’s administration as “a kleptocracy.”

“He was privately very critical of Putin and how he was running the country,” Mr. Brokaw said on Monday. “He was equally critical of the Obama administration. He said: ‘They just don’t get us. They’re not dealing with us the right way.’”

Russia’s relations with the United States soured during Mr. Churkin’s tenure at the United Nations, first over Libya and then over crises in Syria and Ukraine. [In an interview in October](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/18/world/vitaly-churkin-russia-united-states.html?rref=collection%2Fbyline%2Fsomini-sengupta&action=click&contentCollection=undefined&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=4&pgtype=collection), he said that Russian-American relations had not been so strained since the Arab-Israeli conflict nearly brought the two Cold War powers to a military confrontation four decades ago.

He was a staunch defender of the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad. He used Russia’s veto at the Security Council to block six resolutions that would have punished the Assad government, including one aimed at referring its actions to the International Criminal Court.

He repeatedly questioned all evidence that appeared to point to Syrian or Russian government crimes in Syria and met every Western criticism of Russia’s conduct there with retorts about the West’s role in Yemen and elsewhere. He picked apart every word of every draft resolution to ensure that it satisfied Russian interests.

But he could also surprise his fellow diplomats. Last December, he negotiated with his French and American colleagues for three hours in a closed room on the wording of a draft resolution to send United Nations monitors to oversee evacuations from Aleppo. It was the first time in months that the Security Council had reached a consensus on Syria.

Mr. Churkin is survived by his wife, Irina Churkina; a son, Maksim; and a daughter, Anastasia.

Photo



Vitaly I. Churkin, the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, in 2006. He was the longest-serving ambassador on the United Nations Security Council. Credit Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

News of Mr. Churkin’s sudden death sent a shock through the diplomatic community, where he was widely seen as a deft diplomat, skilled at using the rules and protocols of the United Nations to his country’s advantage, including Russia’s veto in the Security Council.

Ms. Power, who sparred with him regularly in the Council chambers, [said on Twitter](https://twitter.com/SamanthaJPower/status/833734190101327872) that she was “devastated” by the news of Mr. Churkin’s death. “Diplomatic maestro & deeply caring man who did all he cld to bridge US-RUS differences,” she wrote.

The two were friendly enough that she once took him to see the musical “Hamilton.” Mr. Churkin recalled that her husband, the legal scholar Cass Sunstein, had sat next to him in the theater and schooled him on the United States Constitution.

A previous American ambassador to the United Nations, Susan E. Rice, [called Mr. Churkin](https://twitter.com/AmbassadorRice/status/833738648084430851) “highly effective and very funny.”

Mr. Churkin had been the longest-serving ambassador on the [United Nations Security Council](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/s/security_council/index.html?inline=nyt-org), and he sometimes jokingly referred to himself as the “permanent representative,” the formal title for each member nation’s top envoy to the United Nations.

**The Pattern of Assassination**

**Here are 5 things that must be considered:**

**1.  A Macabre Pattern Has Emerged**

Beginning in 2015, there were several deaths within the Russian Diplomatic corps and a special Russian Presidential adviser.

**–LESIN**

First there was Russia’s RT founder and special adviser to President Putin, [Mikhail Lesin](https://www.rt.com/news/335181-russian-media-tycoon-death-washington/). He died in November of 2015 in his hotel room. Reports said that he appeared discombobulated during his last sighting before he died. Later it emerged that he died of a blunt head trauma. Drinking was blamed, but many questions were left unanswered.

**–MALANIN**

Earlier last month, [Andrei Malanin](http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-greece-russia-diplomat-idUKKBN14T29M?il=0), a Senior Russian Diplomat to Greece was found dead in his bathroom. The causes of death remain unknown.

**–KADAKIN**

Just last month, Russia’s Ambassador to India, [Alexander Kadakin](http://indianexpress.com/article/india/russian-ambassador-to-india-alexander-kadakin-dies-4492419/), an always prestigious role, died of a heart attack, although no one was aware of any previous health issues.

**–KARLOV**

In December of last year Russia’s Ambassador to Turkey was assassinated by a lone jihadi gunmen in an art gallery.  There was no effective security as the killer simply walked up to Ambassador [Andrei Karlov](http://theduran.com/andrey-karlov-martyr-war-terrorism-struggle-peace-syria/) and shot him multiple times in the back.

**–CHURKIN**

[Vitaly Chirkin](http://theduran.com/breaking-vitaly-churkin-russias-un-ambassador-dies-suddenly/) is the highest profile member of Russia’s diplomatic corps to die in recent years.

**2. A Motive For Foul Play?**

Each of the recently deceased Russian Ambassadors were high profile targets for miscreants and criminals, whether state actors, mercenaries or fanatics.

Lesin was a instrumental in the creation of RT, a news outlet which has come under constant attack from the western establishment.

Malanin had overseen a period of warming fraternal relations between Greece and Russia at a time when Greece is feeling increasingly alienated from both the EU and NATO.

Karlov is said to be responsible for helping to facilitate the rapprochement between Presidents Erdogan and Putin.

Kadakin oversaw a period of renewed tensions between India and Pakistan at a time when Russia was trying to continue its good relations with India whilst building good relations with Pakistan.

On the 31st of December, 2016, Churkin’s resolution on a ceasefire in Syria passed in the UN Security Council after months of deadlock. The resolution is still in force.

Anyone who wanted to derail the diplomatic successes that the aforementioned men achieved for Russia would have a clear motive to extract vengeance.

**3. Who Stands To Gain?**

In the matter of Karlov, any derailment of restored Russo-Turkish relations would be good for those happy for Turkey to continue her support of jihadists in Syria rather than moving towards accepting a Russian and indeed Iranian brokered peace process which respects the sovereignty of Syria as Russia and Iran always have, but Turkey has not.

In the case of Lesin, anyone wanting ‘vengeance’ for RT’s popularity would be able to say that a kind of former media boss was taken down.

For Malanin, many fear that if ‘Grexit’ happens, Russia will become an increasingly important partner for Greece. The EU would not like one of its vassal states enjoying fruitful relations with Russia, a country still under sanctions from Brussels.

For Kadakin, it is a matter of interest for those wanting Pakistan to continue favouring western powers and not wanting Russia to be able to mediate in conflict resolutions between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Churkin had come to dominate the UN in ways that his counterparts on the Security Council simply could not. No one really stood a chance in a debate with Churkin. His absence leaves open the possibility for a power vacuum that would makes other peoples’ jobs easier.

**4. Where The Deaths Took Place**

Each death took place on foreign soil. Mr. Karlov’s killing in particular, exposed the weakness of his security contingent. If security was that weak in a comparatively volatile place like Turkey, it goes without saying that security in states considered more politically stable would be even more lax.

Again it must be said that a non-biased detective might say that the only pattern which has emerged is that many people in the Russian diplomatic corps and related institutions have heart attacks. Maybe they eat fatty foods every day and drink and smoke too much. But if this was this case, why are the heart attacks all on foreign soil?

If all of the former Ambassadors except Karlov were really in bad health, is it really just a coincidence that none of these men had a health scare on Russian soil? Again, a pattern has emerged.

**5. The Ethics of Speculation?**

Many will say that it is too early to suspect foul play. Indeed, I must make it clear that this is simply speculation based on a pattern of tragic and at times unexplained events, combined with the objective reality that because of Russia’s recently elevated profile as a born-again geopolitical superpower, Russia is a bigger target for international criminals than it was in the broken 1990s or the more quiet early 2000s.

When such events happen, one’s duty is to speculate so that better health and  safety precautions are taken to ensure the wellbeing of Russia’s important diplomats. Furthermore, if foul play is a factor, it means that such seemingly unrelated events must be investigated more thoroughly.

Russia has historically suffered from invasion, revolution and more recently from immense international pressure. The Russian people, like Russia’s ambassadors are entitled to the peace and long lives deserved by any member of a country that has suffered for too long.

**The Clinton Crime Syndicate**

**By Jim Kouri**

A former U.S. Justice Department senior attorney, Joe DiGenova, has confirmed that a group now comprising a major Task Force in the FBI is directing an official and thorough investigation into all aspects of the Clinton Foundation, including Prima Facie evidence on multiple potential charges against top DOJ Officials and even the U.S. Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, according to a report from intelligence gather and analysis expert, **[Dr.Lyle J. Rapacki](http://www.sentinelintelligenceservices.com/default.html" \t "_blank)**,  released on Saturday.

Agents in the FBI are right now seeking to topple the criminal corruption at the DOJ by targeting all the following individuals:  Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, Assistant Attorney General Peter Kaznick, Assistant Attorney General John P. Carlin,  and Assistant Attorney General Leslie Caldwell.

According to the report, the top officials at the Obama Department of Justice and the White House are paying lip service to the American people but refusing to cooperate with investigators.

“Initially the senior level of the FBI did not approve, but the FBI Director [James Comey] did listen to the case(s) presented to him in a confidential meeting, and the next day sent eight communications to the leadership of the U.S. Congress that an official series of criminal investigations had been approved by him and launched into the multi-faceted Clinton Foundation and any and all supporting and/or benefiting  individuals, offices, agencies, departments, corporations, and other unnamed entities,” Rapacki’s report states.

Dr. Rapacki’s report indicates that “seasoned FBI Special Agents” have come together to thoroughly investigate:

\* Alleged High Crimes and Misdemeanors, Conspiracy and Collusion,

\* RICO Statute violations and Racketeering,

\* Felonious Sex Crimes against minors,

\* Obstruction of Justice,

\* Violation of State Secrets,

\* Allegations of Treason and compromising the National Security of the United States, and

\* crimes still unnamed.

“There is a significant list of suspects, investigatory leads, witnesses, and individuals who were granted heretofore, immunity but have seriously violated said terms and conditions.  A number of politically powerful and connected individuals also are under investigation,” the former DOJ attorney Joe DiGenova told Dr. Rapacki. “Agents within the Federal Bureau of Investigation

“Just think of the FBI as the Vietcong. That’s what they are. They are digging tunnels under the Justice Department. They are going to sink that place,” DiGenova said during an interview with the Daily Caller last Thursday.  
Additionally, DiGenova, who was the first to say that laptops belonging to Clinton lawyers Cheryl Mills and Heather Samuelson were never destroyed in a DOJ deal as previously reported, said that the laptop co-owned by Clinton staffer Huma Abedin and her estranged husband Anthony Weiner has information on it that agents likely already reviewed and know the content of.

He said, “Everything is on that laptop. It’s probably adverse to everything she has said publicly and probably proves that she has committed multiple perjuries. So their stuff like that over at the department of state.” He added, “There’s classified information. There’s pay to play. There’s stuff about destroying documents. No doubt it’s the panoply of issues that they have tried to cover up.”

**Will the Real Voter Fraud Please Stand Up**

After all the information that has come to light in recent months that originated from locations once thought to be highly secret, it’s amazing that any Democrat or member of the mainstream media would dare continue towing the Party line about there is no evidence of voter fraud, but yet there are still people who somehow believe that to be true, simply because the mainstream media says it.

It’s not that there is no evidence of illegal voter fraud, it’s that there is no evidence of illegal voter fraud that is ever seriously covered by the mainstream media. It simply doesn’t fit the mainstream media’s agenda.

Nonpartisan watchdog groups like VoterFraud.org and Watchdog.org have estimated as many as 7 million illegal votes may have been cast, the overwhelming majority going to Hillary Clinton. In a recent study by political scientist [Jesse Richman](http://m.washingtontimes.com/topics/jesse-richman/) of Old Dominion University, he suggested that it looked like Democrats might have good reason to be nervous about an investigation. He estimated at least 800,000 illegal votes were cast.

Arguably the two most egregious known examples right now took place when Barack Obama’s Department of Homeland Security tried to hack into the state of Georgia’s election system a total of ten times, AFTER the votes had already been cast, but before they were certified. Making matters worse is that Georgia’s Secretary of State specifically told DHS they could not have access, and DHS tried ten times anyway.

Reports have also come to light that at least two other states (Kentucky and West Virginia) were also hacked from the same DHS IPS address. That just scratches the surface, and yet Democrats want the rest of the country to believe that there is nothing to investigate… PLEASE!

[**The Washington Times reports:**](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/15/nearly-2-million-non-citizen-hispanics-illegally-r/)

A large number of non-citizen Hispanics, as many as 2 million, were illegally registered to vote in the U.S., according to a nationwide poll.

The National Hispanic Survey provides additional evidence for use by anti-voter fraud conservatives and bolsters an analysis by professors at [Old Dominion University](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) who say non-citizens registered and voted in potentially large numbers.

President [Trump](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/trump/) has announced he will appoint a task force on voter fraud headed by Vice President Mike Pence. He says he wants the investigation to focus on inaccurate voter registration rolls, which are maintained by the states and the District of Columbia.

“It is a fact and you will not deny it, that there are massive numbers of non-citizens in this country who are registered to vote,” [White House](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/white-house/) adviser [Stephen Miller](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/stephen-miller/) told ABC News. “That is a scandal. We should stop the presses.”

The little-noticed Hispanic survey was conducted in June 2013 by McLaughlin and Associates to gauge the opinions of U.S. resident Latinos on a wide range of issues.

Inside the poll is a page devoted to voter profiles. Of the randomly selected sample of 800 Hispanics, 56 percent, or 448, said they were non-citizens, and of those, 13 percent said they were registered to vote. The 448 would presumedly be a mix of illegal immigrants and noncitizens who are in the U.S. legally, such as visa holders or permanent residents.

A 1996 federal law, and other statues, makes it a felony for non-citizens to register. The poll did not ask if they voted.

But James Agresti, who directs the research nonprofit “Just Facts,” applied the 13 percent figure to 2013 U.S. Census numbers for non-citizen Hispanic adults. In 2013, the Census reported that 11.8 million non-citizen Hispanic adults lived here, which would amount to 1.5 million illegally registered Latinos.

Accounting for the margin of error based on the sample size of non-citizens, Mr. Agresti calculated that the number of illegally registered Hispanics could range from 1.0 million to 2.1 million.

“Contrary to the claims of many media outlets and so-called fact-checkers, this nationally representative scientific poll confirms that a sizable number of non-citizens in the U.S. are registered to vote,” Mr. Agresti said.

Another 8.3 million non-Hispanic non-citizen adults were living in the U.S. in 2013, according to the Census.

As the nation’s immigrant population, both legal and illegal, grows, the question of non-citizens voting illegally has caught the attention of more grass-roots conservative groups. Aliens tend to vote Democratic and have the ability to sway a close election.

The focus intensified in 2014 when two professors at [Old Dominion University](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) and one at George Mason University collaborated to produce perhaps the first data-driven analysis of non-citizen voting, relying on the biennial Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), headquartered at Harvard University, with polling by YouGov.

Relying on the CCES responses to citizenship questions, [ODU](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) team estimated that 6.4 percent of non-citizens voted in the 2008 election. They presented a range as low as 38,000 and as high at 2.8 million.

The CCES authors at Harvard, Amherst and YouGov reacted with outrage. They said the small number of respondents among a sample of 38,000 people made the answers meaningless. They picked at their numbers, declared them unreliable and concluded that zero noncitizens voted.

Their rebuttal prompted the liberal media to proclaim the [ODU](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) study “debunked” even though those professors stick by their work and have filed counter-rebuttals.

The 2013 Hispanic Survey tends to confirm the [ODU](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) work and chief defender, professor Jesse Richman. The Hispanic Survey’s 13 percent registration rate is right in line with what the CCES data indicates in multiple elections.

Mr. Agresti said the [ODU](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) paper found that in 2008, 2010 and 2012 between 14.5 percent and 15.6 percent of self-declared non-citizen adults were registered to vote.

In other words, the CCES and National Hispanic Survey, done with different sample sizes, align.

Still, the liberal media declares the [ODU](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/old-dominion-university/) work “debunked.”

McLaughlin and Associates conducted the Hispanic poll for John Jordan, a winery owner and Republican activist. California vineyards rely on Latino farm workers.

The media’s dismissal of voter fraud has not chased the [White House](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/white-house/) from the issue. [Mr. Miller](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/stephen-miller/), the senior While House adviser, made the case Sunday on “ABC’s This Week,” angering host George Stephanopoulos.

“An issue of voter fraud is something we’re going to be looking at very seriously and very hard,” [Mr. Miller](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/stephen-miller/) said. “But the reality is, is that we know for a fact, you have massive numbers of non-citizens registered to vote in this country. Nobody disputes that.”

He added, “The [White House](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/white-house/) has provided enormous evidence with respect to voter fraud, with respect to people being registered in more than one state, dead people voting, non-citizens being registered to vote And as a country, we should be aghast about the fact that you have people who have no right to vote in this country, registered to vote, canceling out the franchise of lawful citizens of this country.”

Instead of focusing on the registration issue, an agitated Mr. Stephanopoulos lashed out at [Mr. Trump](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/trump/) for claiming there were 3 million to 5 million illegals voting Nov. 8 and that voters were bused in from Massachusetts to vote in New Hampshire.

“You have provided zero evidence that the president’s claim that he would have won the general — the popular vote if 3 million to 5 million illegal immigrants hadn’t voted, zero evidence for either one of those claims,” the host said.

In his Super Bowl interview with Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly, [Mr. Trump](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/trump/) veered away from the 5 million prediction and instead said he wants his task force to focus on cleaning up registration.

“It has to do with the registration,” he said “And when you look at the registration and you see dead people that have voted, when you see people that are registered in two states, that have voted in two states, when you see other things, when you see illegals, people that are not citizens and they are on the registration rolls.”

“Look, Bill we can be babies, but you take a look at the registration, you have illegals, you have dead people, you have this, it’s really a bad situation, it’s really bad.”

**The Art of Propaganda**

One of the most favored propaganda tactics of establishment elites and the useful idiots they employ in Marxist and cultural-Marxist circles is to relabel or redefine an opponent before they can solidly define themselves.  In other words, elites and Marxists will seek to “brand” you (just as corporations use branding) in the minds of the masses so that they can take away your ability to define yourself as anything else.

Think of it this way: Say you want to launch an organization called “Movement Blue,” and you and others have gone through great struggle to grow this organization from the ground up.  However, just as your movement is about to achieve widespread recognition, someone else comes along, someone with extensive capital and media influence, and they saturate every outlet with the narrative that your movement is actually more like “Movement Red,” and that Movement Red is a terrible, no-good, bad idea.  They do such a good job, in fact, that millions and millions of people start calling you “Movement Red” without even knowing why, and they begin to believe all the negative associations that this label entails.

Through the art of negative branding, your enemy has stolen your most precious asset — the ability to present yourself to the public as you really are.

Negative branding is a form of psychological inoculation.  It is designed to close people’s minds to particular ideas before they actually hear those ideas presented by a true proponent of the ideas.  But beyond that, negative branding can also be used to trick groups and movements into abandoning their original identity.

For example, the concept of economic freedom for individuals –the freedom from overt government interference or government favoritism for certain people over others, the freedom to compete with ideas and ingenuity to build a better business and a better product, the freedom to retain the fruits of one’s labor — used to be widely referred to as “free markets”, as defined by Adam Smith.  The very basis of free market philosophy was to remove obstruction and economic oppression from the common man in order to inspire a renaissance in innovation and prosperity.  The problem is, you rarely hear anyone but libertarians talk about traditional “free markets” anymore.

Though Karl Marx did not coin the term “capitalism,” he and his followers (and editors) are indeed guilty of the pejorative version now used.  It has always been Marxist propagandists who have sought to redefine the idea of “free markets” in a negative way, and the use of the term capitalism is how they did it.  They have been so effective in their efforts that today even some free market proponents instead refer to themselves as “capitalists.”

While “free markets” denote freedom of the common man to pursue a better life through productivity and intelligence and merit, “capitalism” denotes a monstrous and blind pursuit of wealth and power without moral regard.  One gives the impression of fairness, the other gives the impression of tyranny.

Is there even such an animal as “capitalism?”  I can’t really say.  What I do know is that the system we have today, a hybrid mutation of corporatism and socialism, is certainly NOT a free market system if we are to follow the true definition and the original intent.  Yet, whenever cultural and economic Marxists attack the notion of economic freedom, they use the system we have now as an example of the failures of “free market capitalism.”

This is the magic of negative branding, and it is used in every facet of social life and geopolitics.

Now, before I get into the term “populist,” I recognize that people opposed to my position will immediately spring into a tirade about how liberty and sovereignty champions brand those against our ideals “in the exact same way.”  This is not quite true, though.

When we refer to “globalists” in a negative manner, we are taking a pre-existing label, something that they often call themselves, and pointing out that their philosophy is flawed and highly destructive based on historical evidence and verifiable facts.  We are not seeking to redefine them as anything other than what they already are.  We are merely exposing to the public what they OPENLY promote and believe and then offer our side and our evidence as to why their beliefs are wrong.

This is not what they do to us.  Instead, globalists and their cronies prefer that the public does not get to hear our views directly from us.  They rarely, if ever, actually use our publications as a source for their attacks on our principles.  They would much rather tell the public what we are and what we believe before they are ever exposed to us.  This is why you will often find that many participants in protest groups at events held by anti-globalists like Ben Shapiro or Milo Yiannopoulos have never actually seen or heard a single speech by the men in question.  They have no idea what we really stand for.  In fact, they protest our speakers, groups and movements based on what they were told we stand for by other biased sources.

This brings us to “populism.”

There has been a deep and concerted propaganda campaign taking place against liberty activists, sovereignty champions, anti-globalists, anti-SJW groups, and conservatives in general.  I noticed this particular campaign accelerating at the beginning of 2016, and it was the primary reason why I chose to take a hard stance on my predictions for Brexit passage and a Trump election win.  The propaganda narrative could be summarized as follows:

Since early 2016 (according to globalists and the mainstream publications featuring their opinions), there has been a rising tide of nationalists and “populists” in western nations.  This sudden surge in “populism” is inexorably tied to the Brexit movement and the support for candidates like Donald Trump.  Populism will overrun the existing “stability” of globalism and cause severe economic crisis in numerous countries.  It finds its roots in the “less educated” portions of the population, as well as in older generations that think they have something to lose if globalism succeeds.  It is also driven by an “irrational fear” of economic change, global interdependence and multiculturalism.  Populists are predominantly naive and desperate for “strongmen” leaders to fight for them.  Some of them are motivated by self interest, while others are motivated by racism.

You can see these sentiments expressed bluntly in numerous mainstream media outlets.  [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/29/frenzy-hatred-brexit-racism-abuse-referendum-celebratory-lasting-damage) has no qualms about linking the Brexit to “racism” and populism, for example.  [The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/18/is-it-possible-to-have-populism-without-racism/?utm_term=.ccd606246fcf) also has had no problem linking the Tea Party and Trump supporters to racism and populism as well.

Beyond the paper-thin accusations of racism, the general thrust of the negative branding is clear; if you are against globalism (or elitism) and its major tenets, then you are a “populist.”  This is reiterated in recent articles from [Bloomberg](https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-02-10/how-do-you-know-a-populist-when-you-see-one-quicktake-q-a) and [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/oct/13/birth-of-populism-donald-trump).

But in such publications, the most egregious argument is the one that is not directly made.  The insinuation is that “populism” is not just defined by a fear of corruption through organized elitism, but that this fear is UNFOUNDED.  Meaning, anyone who argues against the mechanizations of globalists, for instance, is not only redefined as a “populist,” but he/she is also, essentially, ignorant or insane.  See how that works?

The populist label is often used to describe a political movement built on the cult of personality, a sycophantic love affair with a celebrity dictator that tends to have ulterior motives.  Thus, the philosophical underpinnings of that particular movement are further eroded because they don’t even know why they are doing; they are only playing a foolish game of follow the leader.

So, to recap, according to the establishment and their “press,” conservatives and sovereignty activists are actually “populists.” Our concerns over uncontrolled immigration and open borders are not based on rationalism and historic evidence of social and economic instability as well as the highly evidenced threats of terrorism; they are based on “xenophobia.”

Our concerns over the increasing fiscal weakness generated by the economic interdependence of globalism and our lack of self reliance are not based on math and logic, but our “lack of understanding” on how interdependence makes everything better.

Our concerns over rampant organized elitism and the corruption this entails are not based on numerous concrete examples, not to mention exposed documentation and the words of elitists themselves; they are based on a “fantasy world” of “tinfoil hatters” who just make stuff up while consuming heaping helpings of “fake news”.

If this is the case, then I suppose I should fasten my own tinfoil hat tightly and note that this narrative is part of an ongoing long-game by globalists.  They are not attempting to achieve the demonization of conservatives and sovereignty advocates today or tomorrow.  This is about preparing the public for a near future, perhaps five to 10 years from now, after they have sufficiently sabotaged the global economy and scapegoated us for the crisis this will cause.

Not possible, you say?  By all means, read my article [‘The False Economic Recovery Narrative Will Die In 2017’](http://alt-market.com/articles/3102-the-false-economic-recovery-narrative-will-die-in-2017) for further explanation.  If we are not careful, we will be redefined not just by establishment propaganda, but by a global calamity that will be gift wrapped with our name on it and tied around our collective necks.

In the meantime, how do we fight back against this disinformation campaign?

One factor that a “populist movement” generally does not have is the ability to remain self-critical.  Populism, at least according to the mainstream media, requires a mentality of mass blind faith in a cause that is misunderstood or a leader that is dishonest.  The liberty movement and conservative groups still have some members who are not afraid to point out when we are going astray in our logic or our actions.

We have not been silenced by our own peers, yet.  Given enough crisis, it is hard to say how people will react.  A major terrorist attack, an economic panic, a war; these kinds of rip-tides can inspire a lot of intolerance for contrary views.  We are not there at this point, and as long as members of our movement are able to retain a critical eye, we will never be “populists.”

Another method is to refrain from adopting the “branding” that the establishment tries to use against us.  Beware of anyone within our groups and organizations who begins referring to himself or us as “populists” as if this is a label of which we should be proud.

In the long run, people with ill intent will call us whatever they want to call us.  The real issue is, will those labels stick?  Will we help them to stick by losing our composure and acting the way the propagandists always said we would?

Negative branding is about burning a hole in the historical record, because memes last far longer than people.  In 100 years, how will we be remembered?  This is what the globalists value most — future impressions of today by generations not yet born.  Because wars are not just fought in one moment over one piece of ground or over one idea; they are fought in ALL moments, for days not yet passed, for the posterity of all ideas, even those not yet thought of.  If we do not fight back with this in mind, winning will be impossible.